(b) if so, what action has been taken by Government in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): (a) and (b) The location and topography of the Charar-e-Sharief township is conducive to surreptitious movement and infiltration of militants in the area. The Government is alive to the situation and necessary steps have been taken to strengthen the security arrangements in the area to contain possibilities of such movements and infiltration into the township, and to provide security and confidence to the people in the area. Steps have also been taken to check infiltration into the State which include further gearing up of the intelligence machinery, exchange of information and coordinated action by Central and State agencies, intensified patrolling at the borders and the LOC, and construction of border fencing and floodlighting in the vulnerable stretches of the Indo-Pak border in the State.

Financial Militants in Kashmir by Governments of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait

3937. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item published in the Tribune, dated 9th February, 1995 that Governments of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait will be sending funds soon to finance militancy in the Kashmir Valley;

(b) whether Government have sought any clarification in this regard from the respective Governments; and

(c) if so, what is their reaction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): (a) Government are aware of the news-item.

(b) and (c) The matter has been appropriately taken up at diplomatic level and a close watch is being maintained.

Situation around Dargah Charar-e-Sharief

3938. SHRI GOVIND RAM MIRI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-report appearing in the 'Statesman' dated the 13th March, 1995, under the caption "Charar-e-Sharief a tinder box";

(b) if so, whether Charar has been under complete command of the militant outfit, Hizbul Mujahideen; and over 150 foreign mercenaries, mainly from Afghanistan, for the past one month;

(c) if so, whether due to lack of any strategy and coordination, the security forces have failed to remedy the situation and Hazratbal-like situation is fast developing in the holy town of Charar; and

(d) if so, the preventive steps being taken there?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Government is aware of the presence of militants including foreign mercenaries in the township of Charar-e-Sharief where the Shrine of Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani is located. It is not possible to indicate the precise number of militants who may be present, but the report appears to be considerably exaggerated on this score. There are reports of the militants having set up bunkers in the townships, including in the area around the Shrine. The Security Forces are maintaining their presence in the vicinity of the town so as to ensure that no further unde-

sirable elements are able to enter the town. However, there are no restrictions on the movement of supplies or the people of the township. A close watch is being maintained on the situation and further steps will be taken as may be necessary and warranted with the aim of flushing out the militants and neutralising possible threats keeping in view the sanctity of the Shrine and the topography of the area.

Damage caused to properties of Kashmiri Hindus

3939. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of houses, shops and places of worship destroyed, desecrated by militant activity which belongs to Kashmiri Hindus now living outside the valley;

(b) the number of such houses or places of worship to which ex-gratia relief/payment has been made and how many are still pending therefor;

(c) whether/inspite of the ex-gratia relief having been sanctioned amounts in many cases have not yet been actually paid; and

(d) if so, the details and reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): (a) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Problems of Kashmiri migrants

3940. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news which appeared in The Hindustan Times dated the 10th February, 1995 to the effect that All India Kashmiri Migrants Employees' Forum, at its recently held meeting, protested against the apathetic attitude of the State and Central Governments to the problems of Kashmiri migrants in general and migrant employees in particular;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) what are the main problems of these migrants; and

(d) the steps taken by Government and State Administration to sort out their problems?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): (a) The news-item referred to in the Question did not appear in the 'The Hindustan Times' dated 10-2-95.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The All India Kashmiri Migrants Employees Forum has been raising some demands from time to time. Secretary, Department of Jammu & Kashmir Affairs took a meeting on 18-3.95 with representatives of this Forum. As per discussion held in the meeting their demands like transfer of Service Books to Resident Commissioner's Office in Delhi, preparation of GPF Schedules, settlement of matured SI policies, settlement of pending pension cases, etc. were forwarded to the State Govt., who are taking necessary action.

J&K leaders, visit to captial

3941. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the names of leaders from Jammu and Kashmir and their party affiliation who visited the Capital in March, 1995;